Diane Gump

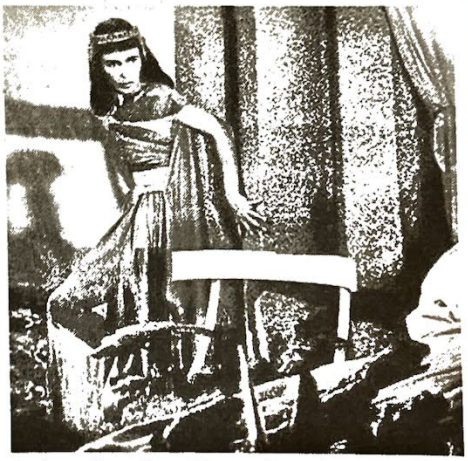
"The Feet"

SAMUEL CLAESSON

Betty Grable was "The Legs," Jane Russell was "The Bosom," Vikki Dougan was "The Back," and Diane Gump was "The Feet," although you probably never heard of her. She's a gorgeous brunette who appeared in movies such as *Neptune's Daughter* (1949), *The Merry Widow* (1952), *The Prodigal* (1955), *The Egyptian* (1954) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956). She often portrayed women of Egyptian, Arabic, and Turkish descent. It was a niche that helped her get onscreen work, but never anything beyond a walk-on.

Diane Gump

Diane Gump (left) and Anne Baxter in The Ten Commandments (1956).



An invasion of reptiles makes Diane recoil in The Ten Commandments.

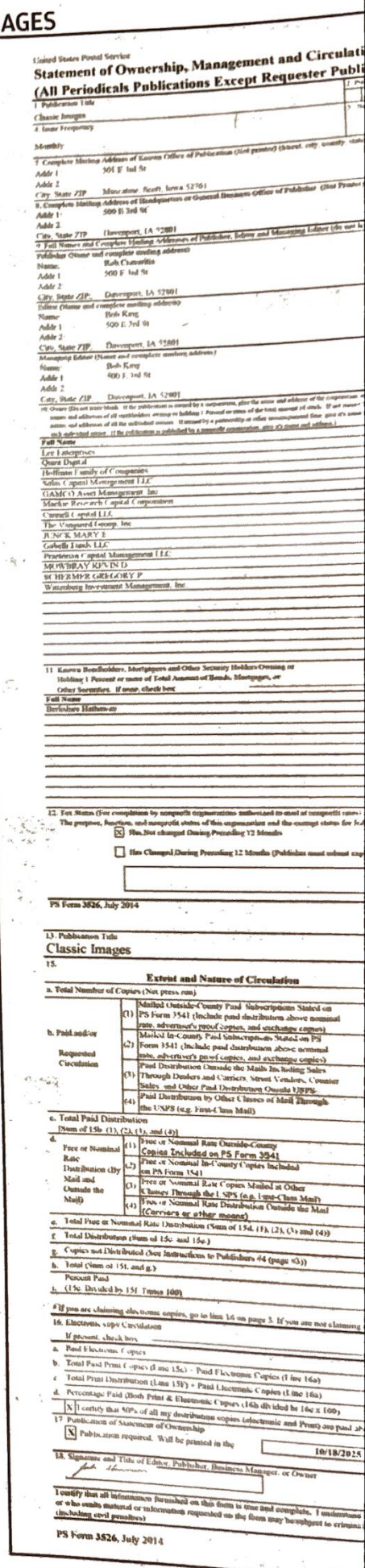
The 94-year-old Diane Myerson, as she's now known, lives in Palm Desert, California, with her daughters. Something of a Renaissance Woman, she has lived a diverse life as an actress, academic, and author.

Marialice "Diane" Gump was born on May 11, 1931, in Los Angeles, to wealthy parents. As a child, she was frequently in newspapers because she had lavish birthdays parties and vacations to places like Hawaii and New York. During one of these vacations, John Robert Powers, a modeling agent, saw her with her mother and put her in magazines like Vogue, Look, Seventeen, and Glamour.

It was just what she needed to start a life in the movies. She knew she was a good actress, as she had recently starred in *Uncertain Wings* at the Community Playhouse. Unwilling to let acting distract her from her education, she studied at Polytechnic High School and enrolled at the University of Southern California while doing whatever acting work offered. She appeared in *Lucy Gallant* (1955), where she got to do some choreography in addition to a walk-on. You can see her towards the end of the film wearing a swimsuit on a runway. She did an episode of *Shower of Stars* which helped her qualify for SAG-AFTRA benefits.

Diane thought that she found fame when Cecil B. DeMille offered her a buildup, not because of her voluptuous measurements (35-24-35) but rather her feet. Diane told a reporter: "[DeMille] thinks a girl's feet are her mark of beauty." It wasn't the gimmick she was hoping for, but it did get DeMille to cast her in *The Ten Commandments*. The story of her getting cast is interesting, as she had been hired by a designer named Dorothy Jeakins to model an outfit for the film. That's when DeMille saw her and asked her to wear other outfits being used in the film. He then cast her as a slave, an elderly woman, and guest at the court. She had hoped that DeMille would continue casting her in movies, but it was the famed director's last movie (he died in 1959). Also, the so-called Studio System ended the careers of a lot of starlets, including Diane's.

She later wed James Myerson and had two daughters. Writing novels like The Diary of a Passionate Francophile and Thursday is Ladies Day has kept her mind active.



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